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Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 18 December 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the text of the message of His Excellency Mr. Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the situation in Afghanistan (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present message circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 18 December 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Message from the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Uzbekistan fully supports the efforts of the United Nations to bring about peace and a stable situation in Afghanistan. The documents drawn up and adopted at the United Nations and also the decisions taken by the Six plus Two group on the situation in Afghanistan and the post-war reconstruction of that country, which formed the basis for Security Council resolution 1378 (2001) of 14 November 2001, are, first and foremost, of particular importance.

The resolution's five paragraphs, in our opinion, objectively meet the interests of all the warring, opposing sides in Afghanistan and, without any doubt, should become the principled basis for all subsequent agreements on forming a broadly representative, legitimate coalition government and, ultimately, for achieving stability in Afghanistan and establishing normal good-neighbourly relations between that country and neighbouring States in accordance with the principles and norms of international law.

Uzbekistan supports the agreements reached in Bonn at the United Nations conference on an internal Afghan settlement, and the establishment of a provisional administration headed by Hamid Karzai. We consider these agreements as the first step on the path of a peace process aimed at achieving a compromise between the opposing sides and forming Afghanistan's constitutional State structure on this basis.

At the same time, Uzbekistan, which borders directly with Afghanistan, views closely and with profound understanding the misfortunes and losses that became the fate of the long-suffering Afghan people. During the confrontation in Afghanistan, which has been continuing now for more than 20 years, an entire generation of people drawn into this bloody warfare has grown up. As a result of the protracted opposition, habitual mutual distrust, suspicion, and intolerance have come about in the relations between the sides representing various territorial, ethnic and religious forces. Taking into account all these factors, which have a negative impact on the situation in the country, one can clearly imagine the problems and difficulties that will arise on the path of establishing peace and stability in this State.

Objectively taking into consideration the real situation within and outside Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, like many other countries in the international community, is today undertaking all possible efforts and practicable steps to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people for the purpose of speedily stabilizing the situation in that country. Approximately 6,000 tons of various humanitarian supplies not only of the United Nations, but also of other international humanitarian organizations, have recently been transported into Afghanistan from the territory of Uzbekistan.

The opening of the bridge over the Amu Darya river on 9 December 2001, which was carried out with the participation of representatives of the United Nations

and other international organizations, constituted a further step on the path of mitigating the difficult lot of the Afghan people, which is being aggravated by the severe conditions brought on by the arrival of winter.

The enormous arsenals of military equipment, weapons and ammunition that have been accumulated in Afghanistan during the years of warfare in that territory are one of the serious factors that might not only complicate and exacerbate the situation in the country, but also create conditions for new breeding grounds of local fighting. According to data provided by experts, millions of small arms and thousands of heavy weapons and other military equipment have accumulated in Afghanistan alone.

The fact that these arms remain at the disposal of various practically uncontrollable groups and armed units cannot but give rise to particular alarm. A large quantity of arms is in the hands of the civilian population.

It is important to realize that all this enormous mass of weapons may, for one reason or another, be taken up and used by the warring sides in order to settle international, inter-ethnic, religious and other differences, which, unfortunately, cannot for the time being be excluded.

Any armed confrontation can then lead to an escalation of the war in Afghanistan, with new turns in the course of events and in new forms, increase tension and destabilize the situation in the region as a whole.

We believe that a forwardly moving process of stabilizing the situation and restoring a peaceful life in Afghanistan must be accompanied by a solution to the problem of reducing and removing the enormous mass of weapons that have accumulated during the decades of warfare in Afghanistan, which will make it possible to establish the necessary prerequisites for preventing the further militarization of the situation in that country.

In view of what has been stated above, Sir, I request to you to approach the Security Council with an initiative aimed at considering and adopting a corresponding decision on this matter.

(*Signed*) I. **Karimov**
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan